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ABSTRACT

This report pulls together various issues discussed during an international seminar on workers' education in Asia. It also outlines the key elements of the future program on workers' education. A presentation by Budd Hall, Secretary-General of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), discusses the role of the council in adult education and its current focus. The next section addresses the current global crisis, which provides the context in which one needs to understand workers' education, its meaning, and its potential. A brief description of workers' education in Sri Lanka is followed by a discussion of its meaning and purposes. Three concrete examples of workers' education in different Asian countries are presented and discussed in detail: in free trade zones, in the plantation sector, and with women workers. Critical aspects of workers' education in each of these three areas are listed. A brief overview of workers' education in Nicaragua is followed by a section that highlights key issues, such as the purpose of education, its meaning, issues of living, the methodology of education, and cultural hegemony. Other contents include excerpts from the speech of S. G. Taylor, Director of the International Labour Organisation's Colombo Office; a listing of future directions; and the agenda. (YLB)

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CONSPIRACY OF THE CURIOUS

Salsa blaring
Over Sri Lankan lawns,
As conscious romantics
Sandpaper ideas,
Shape our tools.

Tigers with wings
Share programs, principles
And paper cuts,
Crystallize over arrack
Sandinista urgency
In air fares
And a kaleidoscope of words.

Is it time?
Brush
The mud off our nourishment,
Harvest
Crisp apples and pineapples.

Decide
To smile together
Into the salty breeze,
Work
To defy together
The engineers of shame.

D'Arcy Martin
Colombo, October 1986.

REPORT OF
THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
ON
WORKERS EDUCATION IN ASIA
COLOMBO, OCTOBER 23-27, 1986

Co-sponsored by

International Council for Adult Education

Asian & South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education

National Association for Total Education (Sri Lanka)

Sarvodaya Shramdana Sangamaya

Sri Lanka Foundation Institute

PREFACE

AN INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON WORKERS EDUCATION IN ASIA was organised at The Srilanka Foundation Institute in Colombo during October 23-27, 1986. Jointly sponsored by International Council for Adult Education, ASPBAE, National Association for Total education, Srilanka, Sarvodaya Sangadhama Sangamaya and the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, the seminar was attended by 65 participants from 34 countries of the world. The seminar was largely focused on learning about the context of workers and worker education in Asia and evolving a more detailed programme for the Council on worker education. As a result, grass-root worker educators from Asian countries were invited to be the key participants in the seminar. Others from other parts of the world, members of ICAE Executive Committee and representatives of ASPBAE Region-I associations also joined in the seminar to learn about the experiences of worker educators in Asia.

The seminar was structured to provide an opportunity for discussing the context in which the workers are today in different Asian countries and focusing specially on workers in the unorganised sectors like construction, plantation, rural workers, workers in the free trade zones, and women workers. Through a series of presentations, case studies and small group discussions, a rich analysis was evolved which provided the basis to deliberate on the broad contours of a future programme on worker education which the ICAE could support.

This report is an attempt to pull together various issues discussed during the seminar as well as outline the key elements of the future programme on worker education. The key facilitators of the seminar were Ganesh Pandey from India, D'Arcy Martin from Canada and Rajesh Tandon from India. This report has been prepared by them and edited by Rajesh Tandon and published by the SPRIA, New Delhi.

We are grateful to Canadian International Development Agency, ICAE, ASPBAE, Cebemo, SLFI, Sarvodaya, NATE, Sri Lanka and many others who have made contributions towards making this seminar a success.

It is hoped that the spirit and vision generated during the seminar will be able to guide us through the next more critical phase of implementing this programme of worker education.

THE COUNCIL AND WORKERS' EDUCATION

We are 65 worker activists and adult educators from 36 countries. The majority of us have come from 13 countries of Asia, but there are also participants from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Arabic speaking states, North America and Europe who have come to learn from the Asian experience.

There are many ways to describe an international seminar of this type. One definition which I have heard says that "An International Seminar is a gathering of people who alone can do nothing but together can decide that nothing can be done."

I am, of course, more optimistic than that, but recognize the complex web of local, national and international forces which face worker educators. The worker educator in this way is like the Architect whom others have written about, "How often she expends her whole soul, her whole heart and passion to produce buildings into which she will never enter."

The International Council for Adult Education is an international non-governmental organization with member associations in 80 countries and six continents. Our members are from major countries of the North, the South, the East and the West. We are registered as an NGO on the special list of the International Labour Organization. We are governed by a General Assembly of members which meets every four years and a 33 person Executive Committee which draws representatives from 29 countries and which meets each year. This year we have just finished three days of Executive Committee deliberations here in Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the ICAE is in Toronto, Canada. The Secretariat is small, consisting of an international team of nine full-time people who come from six different countries.

The council is financed through a combination of fees received from its member association, sales of publications and funding for projects which comes from a broad and diversified base of governmental and intermediary agencies located mostly in Canada and Europe. The single largest contributor is the Canadian International Development Agency, which accounts for roughly 30 per cent of an annual budget of US$ 1.5 million.

We are, therefore, as international organizations go, small. This fact plus a philosophical preference for working with other social movements results in a structure which is diverse, pluralistic and highly flexible. The Council is a place of encounter for adult educators and popular educators from all parts of the world and a broad cross-section of social movements such as Women, Peace and Human Rights, Literacy and, of course, Labour.

The work of the Council is carried out in a highly decentralised manner through local and regional associations and networks which are co-ordinated from different locations in the world.

The priority programs of the ICAE include :

1. Workers' Education
2. Participatory Research
3. Women's perspectives
4. Popular education and Primary Health care
5. Support to National and Regional Adult Education Associations
6. Literacy and post-literacy
7. Participatory Formation of Adult Educators
8. Adult Education and Peace

WORKERS' EDUCATION :

The education of workers has been a central concern of the ICAE since its founding in 1972. We have discussed the educational needs of workers and their organisations in each of our world assemblies in Dar-es-Salaam, Helsinki, Paris and Buenos Aires.

In October of 1977, the ICAE organised, in co-operation with the ILO, an International Planning Forum on the Role of Worker's Organizations and Worker's Education in Integrated Rural Development in Udaipur, India, which resulted in a declaration on this subject.

Since 1981, the ICAE has supported a specific program in the field of workers' education which has had the following objectives :

1. to stimulate an awareness on the part of the adult education movement of the special concerns of workers;
2. to support increased use of and attention to the educational programs of existing trade unions and other workers' organizations;
3. to promote workers' education as a central factor in the struggle for a just and viable world.

CURRENT FOCUS :

During the past three days, further clarification has emerged from our Executive Committee Meetings which I wish to share with you.

We re-affirm our support and co operation with the trade union movement and pledge our universal support for the workers' right to learn.

Our priority attention is directed towards what we understand as grass root workers' education. By that we refer to the need for supporting worker educators who work with unorganized sectors, with small independent trade unions, with rural workers and women workers.

Within this, our specific concern is on health and safety in the workplace or field; the links between learning and job security; and countering the propaganda which blames workers themselves for their own situations.

Earlier this month, the Women' Program of the ICAE held an international consultation on "Women and the micro-electronics industries the educational response" in the Philippines. This brought together women workers and educational activists from Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and North America. Delegates from that consultation are among you here in this meeting. All of us are trying to understand the implications of the increasingly global assembly line.

We welcome all of you to this timely and important international seminar. We hope that through your discussions and sharing here during these days that we will find ways to reinforce the efforts of all of us; that we will share approaches and methods to organizing and learning; that we will feel less isolated and vulnerable; and that we will be reinforced in our ability to serve the needs of workers everywhere.

I stand in tribute to you.

I salute you who work with little or no pay, shoulder to shoulder with workers in dusty villages, in hot and poorly ventilated work places, in conditions of often daily danger and long term stress.

We may not soon see the culmination of what will be discussed here these days, but if our work is well conceived and founded we need not doubt the outcome.

Budd Hall
Secretary-General
International Council for Adult Education

October 24, 1986

CONTEXT OF WORKERS EDUCATION IN ASIA

Workers education in Asia is to be situated in a historical context. Asia is the largest continent and contains more than half the the population of the world. Many Asian countries have wide social-economic disparities (for example, India); many Asian countries are still predominantly rural societies (this is particularly true of South Asia). After World War II, several Asian countries adopted the model of importing capital and technology as the means for the development of the country. Starting from Taiwan and Singapore, this model has spread to Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand as well. Japan, of course, is a developed country in Asia and so are Australia and New Zealand. But in many ways, the fates of these workers in different countries are interlinked, more so today than 40 years ago. The world has become increasingly an international arena where decisions made some distance away affect the lives of the people.

Today, countries of Asia are witnessing as well as experiencing the global crisis. It is this crisis which provides the context in which we need to understand workers education, its meaning and its potential.

THE CURRENT CRISIS

"The history of the various efforts in the field of workers' education is almost as old as the history of the working class itself. Innumerable individuals and groups have made sustained and consistent efforts towards the cause of workers' education. But today working poor are in danger of losing the few rights and concessions which they have won through their struggles.

The present crisis is different from previous crisis in three important respects. First, it is a world crisis. It has hit countries and regions with widely differing socio-economic structures all over the globe. As a consequence, the prospects for overcoming the crisis in the context of a national economy have become extremely bleak.

Secondly, unlike previous economic crisis, this crisis does not appear to be part of a cycle of boom and bust. Consequently, we cannot expect the crisis to end spontaneously in a recovery bringing economic prosperity.

Finally, the current crisis is more than an economic crisis. The crisis-ridden capitalist order is creating the conditions for war, and environmental collapse, as well as the poverty and inequality which typically accompany economic crises. In this way the crisis is threatening the very existence of the human race. — GANESH PANDEY

Several aspects of this current crisis need to be mentioned here briefly.

1. The last 30 years have seen a phenomenal rise of multi-national corporations and their global operations. These corporations have the tremendous ability to shift technology and production facility in search of cheap labour, raw materials, tax concessions and huge profits anywhere in the world. For example, as wages and technology rise in the countries of the North, multinational corporations shift their operations to the countries of the South. These corporations have tremendous economic resources at their disposal and have also tried to influence national politics in many developing countries of the world. They have been able to secure free trade zones in the third world countries which are provided by the host governments to facilitate the operations of export oriented business enterprises. Where the multi-nationals operate with impunity, the working class faces tremendous pressures and their rights are highly curtailed. For example, unionisation in free trade zones is actively discouraged in all countries of the South as a concession to these multi-national corporations. It has now been clearly demonstrated that availability of foreign capital in developing countries is always associated with political repression and curtailment of rights of the workers.

2. In the last decade, the world is witnessing the growth of new information and computer technology which is altering the nature of work, workers and work places throughout the world. This technology is available presently to those who are already ahead and largely controlled by the capital. The implication of the new technology are still to be discovered by the workers of the North; so the workers of the South and their organisations are mostly ignorant about this technology and its potential implications on their work, their organisations and their rights.

3. Militarisation and threat for World Peace is another consequence of the current global order. Military budgets are rising in the countries of the South, production systems in the North are geared towards Military equipments. Huge resources are being spent on preparation for war, and peace has become endangered. The nuclear arms race and stockpile has reached unprecedented levels and threatened the very survival of human race. The growing militarisation reflects itself in the small battles and wars which are being fought on the different borders of the world.

4. Rapid ecological degradation has been another element of the present crisis. Massive deforestation has taken place in the countries of the South and their produce have been used by countries of the North.

Emissions from industrial plants are threatening water, air, land and the very survival of large populations-- tribals, fisherfolks, etc. Production of hazardous products and use of hazardous processess has become such an unprecedented phenomena that no government machinery, not even in the North, is able to regulate these hazardous and dangerous processes. Pesticide is one classic example. The continued thirst for profits by multinational corporations and their allies makes them ignore health hazards at work places and the environment pollution outside.

5. Many countries of the South are witnessing massive migration from rural to urban areas. As land becomes less and less available in rural areas, as population increases, as alienation of land takes place, as unemployment and hunger increase in rural areas, as more and more investment is made in urban industrial centres, large populations from rural areas migrate to urban-industrial centres in search of a living. They migrate seasonally, they migrate forever; they migrate alone, they migrate with their entire families. Growing urbanisation and increasing slum and shantytowns are the consequence of this phenomena. It is in this context that uprooting of workers from rural centres and joining in urban informal sector economy becomes a new and crucial phenomenon.

6. The most important aspect of current scenario is cultural hegemony and controlling the minds and beliefs of ordinary workers. A global homogenisation is taking place such that every worker begins to look and think alike, such that a worker is led to believe in her/his inferior capacity, so that he/she agrees to voluntarily surrender to the unilateral control of the management; and this view of the worker and their organisations and their struggles is perpetuated by controlling the media. As one of the most effective tools for the control, the control over knowledge, information and ideas has been used very effectively in recent times to perpetuate a series of myths about workers, their capacity, their organisations and their struggles. This is perhaps the most challenging element of the current crisis and provides the greatest threat to rational, critical thinking and reflection by the working class.

This is the context in which we need to redefine not only our strategies but also our concepts. We need to have new concepts which can confront the complex realities of the contemporary world. At all levels of the labour movement and throughout the community, people need to understand the major changes taking place in society and the economy. How should workers respond to the growing number of attacks on their organizations? Their rights? Can ordinary working people intervene in the decisions that so vitally affect their lives, decisions about employment, welfare services, new technologies, the kind of education our children get, the future of industries, and the type of society we want? What are the alternatives to the widespread destruction of the environment and the plunder of our national resources for the profit of a few? How can we end the criminal waste of our most precious resource: the skills, energies and creativity of millions of unemployed people who have no opportunities under the present socio-economic system?

– GANESH PANDEY

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

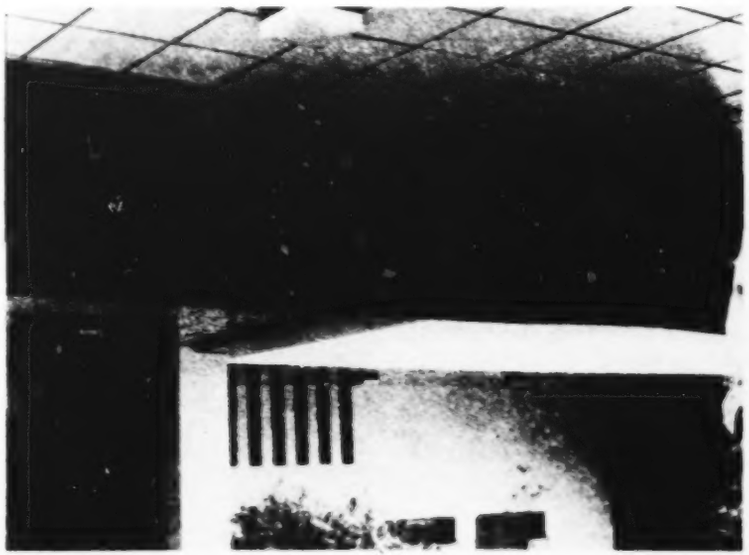
The present workers' education programmes in Sri Lanka have drawn inspiration and resources from a number of sources and these programmes can be categorised into four broad groups on the basis of their objectives and scales of operations:

(1) workers' education programmes conducted by trade union
(2) non-trade union national workers' education programmes,
(3) workers' higher education programmes,
(4) international workers' education organisations operating in Sri Lanka,
(5) (the work of the Worker Educators' Association of Sri Lanka.

Several of the major TRADE UNIONS conduct systematic and continuous workers' education programmes. Most of these programmes however are heavily dependant on support from sources outside the trade union movement. In others, workers' education activities are irregular and sporadic. The great majority of the 1,300 odd trade unions do not conduct any workers' education programmes at all.

Though the workers' education programmes conducted by the trade unions are not widespread some of the best talents and trained skills on workers' education and also accumulated experience on trade union affairs are available within the Trade Union movement itself. This is partly because of the agitational role the trade unions have played on socio-economic issues, especially those affecting labour and partly because of the support some major Trade Unions have got from their International allies in training worker educators.

-DR D. WESUMPERUMA



MEANING OF WORKERS EDUCATION

In discussing workers education, a variety of conceptual and definitional clarifications became necessary. One of the first things to define is: Who is a worker? Of course, the nature of the work force and type of work that has been done varies from one country to another and one location to another. But workers are those who are the labouring class, who are selling their labour and that labour is controlled by others. This includes blue-collar workers and white-collar workers ; it includes workers in the plantations, in agriculture, in construction, in factories, in mines, in offices, in shops ; it also includes workers who are working in the informal sectors where the nature of the industry is not fully organised. It includes women workers, child workers, adult workers; it includes workers in free trade zones; it includes workers like domestic servants, sweepers, cleaners, etc. etc. The important thing is to identify a group of workers as the reference when we talk about workers education.

Then the question is: What is workers education? and, Workers education for What? One thing that became very clear was that workers education has a specific meaning which is beyond trade union education or education of trade union leaders, etc. The discussion in the workshop highlighted three broad categories of workers education:

1. Workers education as it relates to the <u>world of work</u>. This is where skills needed to perform a certain work are included; workers knowledge of the work that they have to perform, the manner in which it has to be performed and the equipment with which it has to be performed and the knowledge of work process etc. becomes important.

Another aspect of the workers education in the world of work relates to understanding how work is organised, how a work organisation operates, who controls that work organisation, what are the forces in the environment of that work organisation, essentially an understanding of the world of work beyond the specific, narrow, limited work that a worker does. This is where the understanding of the ownership of means of production, control over them and the manner in which that control is exercised, is also included.

A third meaning of workers education in the world of work is for workers to understand their rights as workers -- their rights enshrined in laws of land, their rights enshrined in such international organisations as ILO; and this includes not just monetary benefits and opportunities, but also the rights of workers in respect of influencing the process of work and the manner in which it is organised.

Another meaning of workers education in relation to the world of work which has become increasingly important in the recent years is the issue of occupational health and safety.

Understanding the sources of disease, ill-health and accidents that emanate from the process of work itself and ways by which these can be controlled, minimised and regulated has become an important component of worker education in the present context.

And finally, worker education in the world of work also means understanding how certain forces operate within the world of work to systematically discriminate against certain types of workers. This issue has been particularly brought out around sexism and racism where women workers seem to end up in low paid, low skilled jobs in an organisation; as well as ethnic people, coloured people and minorities.

2. The second meaning of workers education relates to understanding a meaning of the organisation of workers and the concept and practice of trade unions. The importance of collective action by workers, the need for coming together as trade unions and organisations, the existing laws and procedures that govern formation and functioning of trade unions in a given context, the forces that support or hinder the formation and functioning of worker organisations, the nature of the leadership and the manner in which worker's interests are respresented in workers organisations are some of the specific meanings of workers education in the organisation of workers. It was pointed out that workers control over workers organisations is as important a

purpose of worker education as workers control over their own labour and work process. Training of workers and activists to assume important leadership roles in workers organisations and trade unions is also part of the meaning of workers education in this category.

3. Third and broad meaning of workers education is related to worker in the society and the humanity. This meaning enjoins workers education to focus its attention on the living conditions of the workers outside the place of work. This includes housing, supply of drinking water, education of children, health care, civil rights, access to learning and employment opportunities for self and other members of the family, nature of neighbourhood, broader concerns and movements in the society. It was repeatedly argued that this broader meaning of workers education needs to be remembered in order to ensure that workers education does not become narrowly defined as trade union education. It is important for the workers to understand what are the central problems of the society they are a part of, what are the causes of those problems, what are other sectors of society doing -- in a sense a general socioeconomic and political awareness and their role in transforming that situation.

It was felt that this broader meaning of workers education will ensure that we look at the contribution of workers education not just in strengthening workers

organisations and workers rights, but also in supporting social movements in a given society.

PURPOSES

The broader question therefore, is what purpose or purposes should workers education serve? An answer to this question obviously depends upon the sociocultural, economic and political context of a given situation, the type of work force that one is referring to and the ideology of the workers educators themselves. But it is possible to list a series of potential purposes that most workers education programmes tend to serve, though not all of them may be served by a single worker education effort. Some of the most common purposes the workers education efforts seem to serve are as follows:

1. Acquiring necessary skills (vocational, technical, intellectual) that are needed to become a productive worker. This is, of course, the most common, pervasive and simple form of worker education. This is also a form which is devoid of any political content.

2. Acquiring a sense of self-confidence, a dignity of work and a positive self-image of being a worker. This is an important contribution of workers education because most workers, as a consequence of their continued oppression, seem to deny themselves any worth, dignity or value. The process of workers education can contribute to this process of valuing of their own experiences, competence, knowledge, capacity, potential and self-worth. This becomes particularly important for certain categories of workers, like illiterate workers, women workers, etc.

3. A third important purpose seems to be to understand workers rights and how to protect and advance those rights. It is here that understanding of various legally provided rights as workers and constitutionally enshrined rights need to be understood and ways to secure those rights and to advance those rights need to be learnt. Trade union education comes generally under this purpose because trade unions are seen as vehicles to secure and advance the rights of the workers. Understanding the process of collective bargaining with the management or the government and their representatives is part of this purpose. Therefore, understanding the meaning of trade unions and how they function and enhancing the democratic character of those trade unions is part of this purpose as well. Increasing workers control over their own organisations can be an important purpose of workers education. Most workers education efforts initiated by trade unions seem to concentrate under this purpose.

4. A broader understanding of the societal, national and international forces and the manner in which they affect

the position, the rights and the location of the workers, the international division of labour and flow of capital, etc. seem to be contributing towards the purpose of enhancing the broader understanding of a worker to begin to play a more historic role in transforming the society. This purpose of workers education seems to go beyond mere trade union education or collective bargaining education and focuses on broader questions of social justice, equality, democracy, freedom etc. Efforts in this direction seem to be fewer, and it was felt that this purpose of workers education also needs to be understood and emphasised.

It was felt that neither of these purposes are mutually exclusive and that in fact a comprehensive workers education programme must attempt to cover all these purposes in an integrated and cohesive fashion, situated as it will have to be in a given socio-political context.

Thus the debate on workers education, its meaning and purposes seems to indicate that the overall contribution of workers education towards understanding of broader social issues in a given society and learning mechanisms to deal with those issues was recognised. It was felt that the workers education for the liberation of the working class and for the transformation of the entire society was perhaps its most noble as well as its most important purpose.

A crucial issue for all of us involved in workers' education is "Who should we be working with?" For the purposes of education the definition of "worker" must be broadened to include rural areas, the unemployed and those who lack union representation. Traditional definitions tend to be limited to urban, industrial and unionized employees, an approach which is obviously too narrow, especially for the realities of Asia. All labouring people should be seen as working for capital, and therefore all of them belong in a sense to the "working class."

The cultural question is of great importance. Education should look to the traditions of opposition, protest and dissent within the cultural history of oppressed people. Doing this will encourage workers to see the links between their situation and other sections of society who have been oppressed and whose rights have been denied. Similarly, we should remember that cultural backwardness, for example illiteracy, ignorance and superstition, are powerful contributors to poverty and lack of development. In such regions the battle against cultural backwardness is a necessary condition for any kind of breakthrough.

Workers' education must also broaden the involvement of workers in their organizations and in a range of struggles. This is particularly relevant in view of the dominant form of workers' organizations--the trade unions. Trade unions have been narrowly focussed on collective bargaining on wage questions. Labour needs other active social movements, even to accomplish its own goals. We need to have "social movement" unions, rather than the "collective bargaining" unions of today which are becoming totally ineffective. The labour movement also needs to coordinate its efforts with groups which are taking up the questions of women, the environment, peace, human rights, health, and other issues.

-GANESH PANDEY

WORKERS EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

The workshop also discussed several concrete examples of workers education in different Asian countries. Given the different situations obtaining in different countries of Asia, three main examples were taken up for detailed presentation and discussions. The first one related to workers in the free trade zones. Free trade zones are export oriented industries that have been operating in Asian countries since early 60s. Taiwan and Singapore were the early examples followed by Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc. etc. Hong Kong is in fact considered as a free trade zone country. The second focus was on rural workers, in particular plantation workers. A large percentage of workers in many Asian countries are still working in rural areas, related to land. Plantation as a form of land management and ownership employs large number of workers in countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia etc. And finally, special focus on women workers was kept in order to highlight the concerns of women within the working class. Besides specific case studies, detailed analysis of the practice of workers education in these three sectors was done and factors that appeared as obstacles as well as opportunities in them were identified.

WORKERS EDUCATION IN FREE TRADE ZONES

Two detailed examples of the situation of workers in free trade zones and the nature of workers education were presented. The first one related to Penang. Free Trade Zone in Penang came in 1959. Historically, they have been created in physically demarcated industrial sites with provision for cheap infrastructure like land, electricity, water etc., building of facilities like roads, storage, and provision of special tax exemptions for three to five years. Electronics and textiles/garments have been the two favourite activities in free trade zones which have traditionally been very labour intensive and have been dominated by multi-national corporations. Most factories in free trade zones employ young women between 18-25 years of age who come from rural areas in search of jobs. In Malaysia, most of these young women workers have 6 years of education and are recruited from their villages to work in these factories. The working conditions and wage rates are extremely depressed and workers are employed in shifts and many of them are asked to do over-time despite their wishes. While the trade unions and industrial relations acts provide protection for workers as well as creation of unions in Malaysia, there is a lot of effort on behalf of the management and the government to ensure that workers do not organise. Even after fifteen years, the Registrar of Trade Unions in Penang has not permitted Electrical Unions to organise electronic workers in the free trade zones.

In Sri Lanka the free trade zones came in 1978 and again young women workers were employed in large numbers. According to one estimate, women workers account for as many as 80% of the total work force of free trade zones in 1984 in Sri Lanka. The wage level in free trade zones in Sri Lanka is said to be the lowest among the Asian countries. The wage payment in free trade zone is generally done on basis of quotas, on piece-rate. Workers are forced to compete with themselves in the hope of making a little more money. While the law does provide for the possibility of unionisation in free trade zones in Sri Lanka, the experience has been quite otherwise. One Politex factory strike in 1980 led to the termination of services of 7 women workers who provided leadership to workers. Examples of police harassment of workers demanding their rights and pressure from the state machinery not to unionise abound in Sri Lanka as well.

The living conditions in free trade zones are abysmal. Normally the company provides for small rooms as boarding facilities where 8-20 women huddle together. The boarding hostels are also controlled by the companies. In Penang,

this has created special problems in terms of access to women workers because there is no access at the workplace and also no access in company hostels. In Penang, about 6 years ago, a small effort by some workers themselves, with the help of a few other sympathisers, has created a Workers Education Centre where small groups of workers come together, share their problems, try to understand their rights and acquire knowledge and confidence to be able to protect their rights as workers. The Workers Education Centre has assisted in the struggles of workers around retrenchment, unionisation and wages. The activities of the Centre focus around small group events, workshops, cultural activities so that the workers are able to acquire a sense of identity. The Centre has helped produce some educational pamphlets and has also assisted some trade unions in their educational work. By and large, the Centre has been operating independent and autonomous of the trade union movement.

A women's Centre in Sri Lanka has been created by some of the women workers who were retrenched as a consequence of their struggle in the free trade zone. Located near the free trade zone, this Centre helps women understand their rights and share their experiences and relate to other workers. One of the key activists of the Centre narrated her experiences of being a worker in the free trade zone and a worker organiser/educator.

CRITICAL ASPECTS OF WORKERS EDUCATION IN FREE TRADE ZONES

The situation of workers in free trade zones of the Asian countries presents special aspects in respect of workers education. Some of the key aspects are as follows:

1. Free trade zones are created as a deliberate part of the development strategy of governments to promote export and bring foreign exchange. Many multinational companies are invited to open their factories in free trade zones. As a result, the governments are very sensitive to any unionizing or educational work among the workers in free trade zones. Even the laws are prepared in such a way that unions and unionization are discouraged in free trade zones (as in Korea). In other places, where the law does not discriminate against trade unions, there is still an active discouragement of unionization in free trade zones.

2. As physically separate units, free trade zones create special difficulty in providing access to educators and organizers. They are debarred from entering the free trade zone and very rarely get an opportunity to meet the workers at their place of work. In many cases, the workers of free trade zones live together in company-provided hostels where also there is a great difficulty in having access. The company buses take the workers from the hostels to the place of work and back, and thus make it very difficult to have access to them.

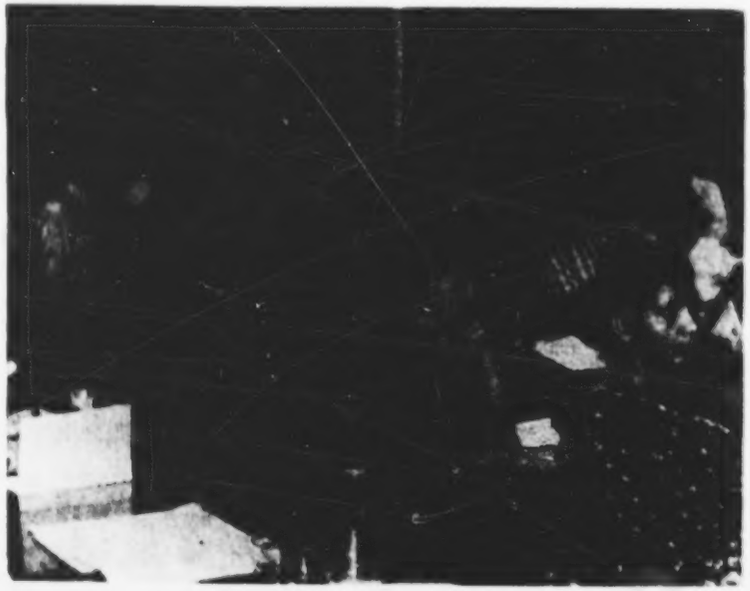
3. The excessive overtime and shift type of work in free trade zones makes it diffucult for workers to have any regular free time available in which to pursue their educational activities. As a result, it becomes very difficult to bring workers together in a group to engage in a dialogue or discussion. A related problem is that attempts to unionise or educate workers in the free trade zone meet with severe repression from the managements and it is supported by the governments. As a result, victimisation of organizers, educators takes place. This means that those initiating this process may end up supporting victimised organisers. On the other hand, victimised workers become excellent organisers and educators in free trade zones as has been demonstrated by several experiences.

4. Initially, free trade zones were seen by the workers and the unions of the North as ways to take away the jobs from them to the workers in Asian countries. Many of them have now begun to realise the linkages between these jobs and the free trade zones and their own jobs and wages and rights. As a result, it is possible to develop international linkages with unions and workers belonging to the same multinational corporation or to similar industry and create pressure in the North so that the managements and the owners are forced to follow a certain minimum wage rate and standard of working condition in their subsidiaries in the South. This kind of international linkage can create access to

information across various subsidiaries of the same multi-national as well as provide valuable lobbying points.

5. It was generally experienced that the issue of living, as opposed to working, were very central for the workers of the free trade zones. General conditions of housing, health, education, cultural amenities etc. for free trade zone workers were terrible and these could become issues around which educational and organisational work can be initiated. In fact, it was felt that an organisation which focuses on such living concerns like health, housing, cultural activities, as opposed to wages and working conditions may be initially allowed to function by the governments and the employers. Thus welfare organisations and NGOs or church-related organisations may be able to have access in the first stage before more indepth educational and organisational task could follow.

6. It was generally felt that the educational methodology for free trade zones workers has to be innovative and different. For example, working through the process of organising free trade zone workers, participating in a variety of struggles inside and outside the work place, and raising demands for better housing and cultural amenities and educational provisions may, in fact, be the most important educational process for free trade zone workers than classroom courses which may be accessible to workers in the organised sectors of the industry where trade unions have been able to win the right of paid educational leave and have the infrastructure to organise such courses. In fact, the experience of the educational work with free trade zone workers seems to suggest that educational process of workers needs to be viewed in a broader context than mere courses and workshops and training programmes. It is the daily struggle for survival, for collectivisation, for securing and advancing their rights, that the educational process for workers seems to unfold more dramatically and powerfully.



WORKERS EDUCATION IN PLANTATION SECTOR

Sri Lanka has about half a million plantation workers, and about half of these are women. About two-third of all plantations are owned by the state corporations. Plantations in Sri Lanka came in 1830 with coffee, 1850 with tea, and rubber in 1870. Plantations now also include coconut, cocoa, cardamum, pepper, etc. Earlier owned by largely British private plantation owners, the take-over of the plantation by the state has not changed the situation much. The plantation workers in Sri Lanka are mostly Tamil and have also faced the problem of lack of citizenship rights in the past. The management of the plantation in Sri Lanka has been borrowed from the Hacienda style of management which are very hierarchical, authoritarian, semi-feudal and military-oriented systems of agriculture. The workers also live in the housing provided by the Estate owners and their children go to schools run by the Estates. As a result, the plantations represent the situation where the entire life of a plantation worker is controlled by the Estate owners. Even the grocery and provisions stores on the plantations are run by the owners and their representatives. So the workers suffer from a very high degree of indebtedness and continuously depend on the owners of the plantation for their survival. Unionising and educational work under such circumstances is very difficult. The worker's day starts very early in the morning and goes upto late afternoon. Much of the educational work has to be done at night. There is no facility on the plantation where workers can meet and in many cases this is actively discouraged by the owners and their representatives.

Agricultural labourers, on the other hand, in Sri Lanka as well as other Asian countries are perhaps most deprived and the poorest. In many cases, they have a temporary and single individual owner; by and large, these workers are non-unionised.

A worker on a tea estate in Sri Lanka described her experiences as a worker. She described her life as a continuous work, right from 4 in the morning to 9 at night! She works on a tea-estate where there are about 3000 workers and more than half women. Plucking tea is the most important task which is generally given to women. The payment system is based on piece-rate based on the weight of leaf and this forces the women workers to compete against themselves. There is a very high rate of illiteracy among workers on the plantation, unlike the general situation in Sri Lanka. It is estimated that more than half of the plantation workers are illiterate. Many of these workers are interested in acquiring the literacy skills but very limited educational provisions exist. Major constraints seem to be lack of time

and infrastructure in supporting an educational programme on plantations.

"When a man makes mistakes on the job, that is an incident; but when a woman makes a mistake, that becomes history."

- Sri Lankan Woman Tea Plantation Worker

CRITICAL ASPECTS OF WORKERS EDUCATION IN PLANTATION & UNORGANISED RURAL SECTOR

The analysis of experience of workers education efforts with plantation and unorganised rural sector workers seem to bring out several key aspects and considerations. The main ones are listed below:

1. The plantation workers in some countries like Sri Lanka are highly unionised; in some other countries, like Malaysia, they are not; unorganised rural workers and agricultural labourers in most Asian countries are mostly non-unionised. As a result, this becomes the greatest impediment in educational effort with unorganised agricultural labourers. Even where high unionisation has taken place, unions and their leadership tend to give low value and priority to workers education. This is partly because the role of the union is seen in a very narrow and limited fashion in acquiring economic gains for its members. Sometimes, education is equated with political propaganda, and not a creative expression, a liberating and empowering experience. As a result, whatever workers education in a small measure is conducted, it becomes a series of indoctrination exercises for their membership.

2. In most agricultural areas, the lack of physical, human and material resources for educational activities creates a major obstacle. In fact, in most rural areas, institutional facilities are not available; preyalence of high degree of illiteracy makes the educational work all the more difficult and challenging. At the same time, the situation creates opportunities to launch educational efforts, like high illiteracy rate among the plantation workers in Sri Lanka.

3. In some cases, the number of agricultural labourers is very limited and some times they work alone or in twos or threes. As a result, the place of work does not become amenable for organising activities; in such situations, the place of living and issues around living become the key focus for edcational and organisational efforts. Issues of housing, health, drinking water, sanitation, education of children, etc. become key educational and organisational concerns for such situations.

4. Unlike other means of production, land is such that it can not be shifted from one place to another. Land infact remains fixed in a particular place. As a result, it is easier to focus on the issue of land, its ownership and control as an educational and organising task for plantation and agriculture workers.

5. The feudal system prevalent in most rural areas in Asian countries seems to r[illegible]force low self-image and negative

self-worth of workers in this sector, and adds a cultural dimension to the problem of oppression and deprivation. As a result, one of the major limitations of educational and organisational work among agricultural, plantation workers is the low self-image and negative self-worth. In fact, improving the self-image and enhancing the self confidence and increasing the self-worth of such workers becomes the first task of an educational efforts.

6. The nature of land relations in many Asian countries, its ownership and control as a means of production has been associated with violent tensions. State repression and militarisation seem to support direct oppression by local landlords and land-owners. Under such circumstances, educational and organisational effort seems to get discouraged and becomes extremely risky and difficult.

7. Agricultural produce, particularly cash commercial crops and products of the plantations, seem to get linked to global markets. Whether it is cotton or sugar or tea or rubber, these products are sold in international markets, and if the prices of these products in the international markets are depressed, because of forces operating in the countries of North, then local land-lords, land-owners and producers try to cut down their production, reduce wages and harass, retrench and exploit the workers further. As a result, education and organisational work among such workers gets influenced by global forces and markets, commodity prices, etc. and these international forces create obstacles in educational and organisational work. At the same time, the same international forces and their impact on the workers in a local situation becomes a potential agenda for the educational work and the educational focus thereby creating the possibility of enhancing workers' understanding of global forces at work.

WORKERS EDUCATION WITH WOMEN WORKERS

Several experiences of the practice of workers education with women workers were presented in the workshop. The experience of Filipino women workers union, KMK, was shared. It was mentioned that more than half the working class in Philippines comprises of women workers but only one-third of them are engaged in gainful employment. Women workers face series of discriminations and harrasments. The most severe form of oppression is because women workers perform dual and double responsibilities. They work eight hours as a worker, and they also work as house-keeper and home-maker at the same time. So women workers in Philippines work from early morning till late at night, and this is the experience in other Asian countries too. In many situations women workers are employed in marginal, low skill, poor paying jobs. Some workers also have informal sector jobs, contract labour jobs, jobs without security of employment. Many women workers in Philippines work in free trade zones, in electronics, garments, manufacturing, etc.

Similar situation obtains in Sri Lanka. It was suggested that women workers in Sri Lanka take on socially accepted occupations like teachers, nurses, in garment and textiles, plantations, agriculture, etc. Though in Sri Lanka there is some amount of political and social equality of status among men and women, this is not so in the economic arena or in case of work.

Discrimination in terms of payment is also common phenomenon in the Philippines; women workers get lower paid jobs and in fact lower pay for same type of work in comparison to men workers.

Another major problem faced by women workers in the Philippines, as everywhere else, is that they are denied certain rights which are available to them legally. For example, maternity rights and leave are available to women workers but most employers hesitate to give maternity leave. They tend to hire very young women, single, unmarried, or they retrench women workers when they become pregnant. Many women workers also work in hazardous jobs like in electronics and these work related health hazards affect their health. Most women workers receive payment on piece-rate basis and this intensifies their exploitation by forcing them to speed-up.

In the Philippines, and it was shared in many other countries, women workers also experience sexual harassment on the job. Their male supervisors or bosses or managers harass them sexually in exchange of promotion or regularisation. The KMK which started in 1979, began to organise women workers into a separate union of women workers so that the concerns of the women workers could be focussed upon more clearly and directly.

It was felt that most trade unions do not pay any special

attention to the concerns of the women workers, even when workers constitute a majority of their members. It was found that in many cases, despite a high percentage of women workers, their trade unions are led and most leadership positions are occupied by men. Women workers because of their dual responsibility, need to go home immediately after work and look after their children, food, household,etc. The men are able to spend time in union work and attend meetings. Though it is organised as a separate women's union, the KMK works within the overall labour movement and the liberation movement in the Philippines. The educational work of KMK is within the overall context of the KMU, the militant trade union in the Philippines. It brings together potential leaders for seminars and three-day workshops to orient them to general conditions of women workers and underlying causes of oppression in the society. It also conducts advanced programmes for leaders. KMK has been able to formulate a charter of demands on the basis of a series of seminars and workshops of its members where the concerns and experiences of women workers were shared, analysed and deliberated upon. These demands are the product of their educational work with women workers in the Philippines.

THE FILIPINO WOMEN WORKERS' DEMANDS-KMK

1. Guarantee womens full participation in gainful employment. More jobs to our Filipino women.

2. Women should not be discriminated because of sex, age and civilian status. Pregnancy should not be made a basis for her termination.

3. Equal pay for equal work done and implement just wages for all Filipino workers- both men and women.

4. Abolish the "piece-rate system" and regularize women workers who have rendered six months work.

5. Women should have equal access to skilled work or to protected jobs.

6. All non-regular and regular women workers should have four months maternity leave benefits.

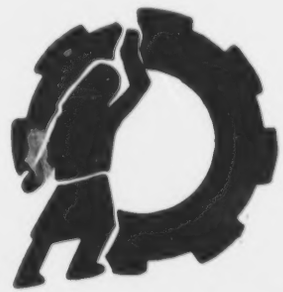
7. Workers with families have the right to parental leave in order to respond to family or their childrens needs without prejudices to their job security.

8. In her period of pregnancy, the woman worker has the right to object to any hazardous or heavy jobs which could affect her health or her baby's health (without any penalty).

9. The employers especially in establishments wherein majority are women, should provide proper facilities for small children (nurseries or day care centers) near the factories or in nearby communities.

10. Hence, forced overtime should be stopped and employers who continue doing such should be penalized.

11. Sexual harassment in any form should be stopped and be taken up as a union issue.



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CRITICAL ASPECTS OF WORKERS EDUCATION WITH WOMEN WORKERS

The analysis of the experiences of workers education efforts with women workers in the Asian context seems to bring out several key issues:

1. The predominent context of Asia suggests that most women workers are on double duty, so to speak. They have their role as workers which takes 8-10 hours a day; they also have their role as home-makers, providers for the family, looking after the children, etc. etc. Unlike in some other contexts where the increasing role of women as workers may reduce their responsibilities at home, this does not take place in most Asian situations. As a result, poor women work from dawn to late at night, sometimes at home, sometimes outside. This is the greatest obstacle to workers education efforts.

   a) Women are so exhausted and tired that they are unable to find energy or enthusiasm or time for participation or education. Education requires alertness, attentiveness, energy, excitement. After 18-20 hours of work everyday throughout the year, most women workers find that they have none of this left for their own educational needs.

   b) Time is the greatest casuality in this context. Women workers do not find any time to devote to their own educational requirements. Organisers and educators find it very difficult to contact women workers either at work or at home. They also find it extremely difficult to bring women workers together to share their experiences, analyse them and learn from them. This becomes particularly severe because in most Asian countries, the concept of paid educational leave does not exist. Most employers do not give time off to workers to pursue their educational needs and interests.

2. Most unions and leadership are not sensitive to special needs and concerns of women workers and, therefore, do not pay much attention, value or priority to them. As a result, in most unions, where the membership is open to both men and women, the needs and concerns of women workers do not find priority or special attention. Even demands of women workers do not get articulated in such a context. It becomes particularly difficult in situations when men occupy key leadership positions in most unions, even though their membership is predominantly comprising of women workers.

3. Broader issues like prices, housing, health, education of children, drinking water, etc. can be more pointedly and easily focused as agenda for educational work with women workers as these concerns affect them most directly and centrally.

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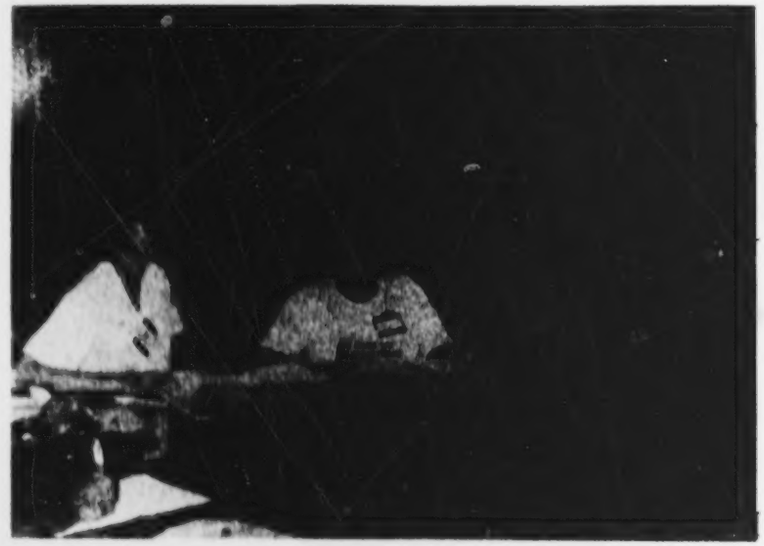
4. High illiteracy rate and lower educational levels among women workers provide an opportunity to focus on these educational needs within the context of overall struggle for organising and unionising women workers.

5. The broader workers movement and workers organisations get influenced by focusing on specific needs and concerns of women workers. The educational methodology and practice becomes challenging and more creative as it begins to address the concerns and needs of women workers because existing models of class-room learning or structured situations are not easily available as possibilities for educational practice with women workers.

6. Several examples demonstrated the value of focusing on services like child care and care of children as basis for building the educational agenda for women workers. A lack of availability of child care, particularly good quality of child care, was seen as a common problem affecting women workers around which educational and organisational work could be carried out effectively.

7. Women workers also do not view themselves in their role as workers. Other roles as mother, as home-maker, as wife, etc. seem to have been so indoctrinated in women that they do not value themselves as workers or do not value their work. Therefore, part of the educational focus with women workers is to make their worker role more visible in their eyes and in the eyes of others. Moreover, assertiveness training to enhance the self-worth of women and the self-confidence of women workers is an important component of workers education effort with women workers.



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WORKERS EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA

During the seminar we had the privilege of learning about the experiences of Nicaragua through a colleague Eduardo Baez who was with us during the seminar. Elaborating the historical context of this central American country, it was demonstrated that how since 1840 United States of America has been continuously intervening in Nicaragua, a process which has continued till this day. The struggle for liberation was the most popular uprising witnessed in any of the countries in modern history. Ultimately in July 1979, the revolution won in Nicaragua and a popular government was installed. Because of the history of the revolutionery struggle and active involvement in and control of popular classes in that struggle, the post revolutionary leadership remained in the hands of popular classes. Its first task was to launch the now famous literacy crusade . Nicaragua had more than half its population as illiterate at the dawn of revolution. This was the biggest political action taken for empowering the people to transform their reality. Popular education collectives were formed and the nation was mobilised to support this literacy crusade.

An interesting aspect of popular education work in Nicaragua is that it is directly and centrally linked to the mass organisations - women's organisations, peasents organisations, workers organisations. Workers' organisations take keen interest in popular education effort and view this as the most important process of transforming their societies and improving the dignity and life of their people.

> "It's not as if workers automatically have the most advanced consciousness, just because it's written in a book".
>
> Eduardo Baez

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ISSUES

The analysis of various experiences, particularly referring to workers education efforts in free trade zones, with plantation and unorganised agricultural labourers and women workers, has brought several issues which require a greater understanding, deliberation and strategising. Some of the key issues are highlighted here for future reference.

1. Central to the concern of workers education is the issue of purpose of education. It became clear during the seminar that workers education needs to serve purposes broader than mere understanding of the rights of workers or the functioning of trade union organisations, important as they are in themselves. If workers and their organisations have to play a larger role in social transformation of societies, then they need to understand the macro forces operating at global level.

2. The meaning of education was another issue that became clearer in this seminar. It was repeatedly mentioned that workers education does not imply courses, workshops, training programmes and reading materials alone. Learning in the process of working and struggling and organising is very much the sense of workers education. When we talk about working with women workers and their double duty, we do not think of residential courses; we have to think of flexible programmes -- evening, lunch hours, weekends, house-to-house; struggle in itself can be a powerful source of education provided it is used as such. Several examples of using a strike, before and after it, as an educational experience for workers were mentioned during the seminar.

3. Issues of living which concern workers like child care, education, housing, health, civil rights, environmental degradation, communal strife, etc. need to be considered as legitimate and important agenda for workers education. It was felt that workers provide an important perspective on some of the societal problems like ethnic conflict, which need to be highlighted and used in order to promote peace in the world. Workers' concerns for peace is perhaps as profound as women's concerns for peace and, therefore, peace becomes an important part of the learning agenda for workers.

4. The methodology of education was also raised as an important issue in worker education. It was highlighted that most workers education in many Asian countries, particularly that offered by trade unions, comprises of stand-up teachings and lectures and is more in the form of political propaganda than learning. It was felt that education has to start from and relate to the daily experience of the workers as workers and as adults and macro forces and analysis must be built from that daily experience. The participatory educational methodology

and learning principles and methods need to be incorporated more centrally in the workers education efforts in various parts of the world.

5. And finally, the issue of cultural hegemony, manipulation of the minds of workers, their belief system, their values and their opinions was seen as the greatest agenda, and perhaps most difficult focus, for workers education efforts. It was repeatedly pointed out how workers themselves have been subtlely influenced to believe in their incapacity, incapability, ignorance, laziness, stupidity, etc. It was also mentioned that how mass media and a variety of cultural symbols have been carefully used to create a series of myths about workers and their organisations and workers education. The workers education efforts need to attempt to understand these myths and understand those forces and mechanisms by which they are created and perpetuated. This will be the major function of workers education in liberating workers and providing them an opportunity to play their historic role in the transformation of societies.

Principles of ICAE Workers Programme

1. Our goal is to link grassroot workers, to exchange ideas and develop new approaches.
2. We should be mission-oriented, rather than service-oriented.
3. Rather than regionalize the program, we should develop inter-regional links, with responsibility for initiatives/ events in different regions each time.
4. The women's program is the strongest and most appropriate link for us in the Council structure.
5. Move to the margins, especially unorganized workers.
6. Work with the people and groups that have energy and fresh ideas.

EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR.S.G.TAYLOR

DIRECTOR, ILO COLOMBO OFFICE.

I should start by saying that the main objective of the ILO's Workers Education programme in Asia and the Pacific as well as in other regions of the world has continued to be the strengthening of representative and independent workers' organisations to increase their effectiveness in the exercise of their traditional roles of collective bargaining, resolving labour disputes and organising to cope with new and changing realities.

With this objective in view, the ILO's most recent workers' education programmes have paid special attention to the development of rural workers organisations, the expansion of trade union participation in economic and social development and the promotion of workers education institutions, their staff, study materials, and their training methods.

There has been an increasing trend towards the emergence of non-governmental trade union support organisations and some foreign-based foundations in the region providing technical assistance and/or financial support to trade unions workers' education and research activities.

There is a clear need for trade union specialists in the areas of labour statistics, productivity, occupational safety and health, the organisation of rural workers and workers in the informal sector, the management of social and economic services of trade unions, international labour standards and others. Recent regional and sub-regional seminars among trade unions have expressed this need, urging the development of a broader range of workers' education courses.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

> "As conscious romantics, we aim for authentic dialogue, based on shared experiences, shared contexts, shared images. Our goal is cultural synthesis, which requires mutual respect, equality of power...and clarity."
>
> D'arcy Martin

Based on the preceeding analysis, sharing of experiences and critical reflection, participants in the seminar identified a series of directions for future -- essentially discussing what are we going to do after the seminar. Several broad future directions emerged from this analysis :

1. It was repeatedly felt that our work in our different countries and contexts can become fairly isolated and lonely. There is a tremendous need to share the information with grass-root workers educators and to exchange experiences in a manner that we can sustain, support and reinforce each other's work. Therefore, building linkages across regions, countries and nations was seen as perhaps the most important future direction. It was also felt that building linkages can provide support and strength to our local organising and educational work as, for example, linking up with like-minded or same industry or same multinational workers in other parts of the world. It was felt that with increasing internationalisation of the world economy and international division of capital, the only way to understand and deal with these forces was by developing an international network of organisers and educators.

2. Learning from each others' experiences in particular around common themes and sectors, was seen as another important future direction. It was pointed out that the popular education experience of Nicaragua, the educational methodology used in Philippines, the health and safety related educational work in Malaysia, Indonesia, India etc. are various concrete examples around which sharing of experiences can be done so that knowledge and skills can be acquired to utilize them in our different contexts.

3. It was felt that the image of the worker, their organisations, their education and their struggles was a matter of great concern and that concrete educational efforts were needed to deal with this problem of perpetuating the images and influencing the minds of the workers themselves. Sharing of information relating to concrete experiences, reflecting on them and linking up grass-roots worker educators beyond their immediate contexts could in a way help break some of these myths and these walls. It was felt that this is a priority direction for future work as very little has been done in this area and without focusing attention on this, in this day and age of sattelite communication and video technology, workers education will be failing in its historical role.

4. It was felt that grass root workers education efforts and grass root workers educators do not have the channels and mechanisms for exchanging learning materials, audio-visual aids and documentation. They neither have much resources nor infrastructure to promote this either. As a result, many such grass root efforts, particularly in remote areas or rural settings, are denied access to these materials and learning aid. It was felt that a mechanism needs to be created which will help support these local initiatives through dissemination of information on a regular basis.

5. It was suggested that perhaps some efforts should be made to strengthen as well as build collective education and research centres in different parts of the world. Some small efforts in this direction have been made in places like Jamaica where several trade unions have come together and supported a workers education and research centre. Around the issues of occupational health and safety, in India, for example, efforts are being made to create four or five workers education, research and documentation service centres. This was perhaps a desirable future direction to pursue in those situations where such facilities and perspectives do not exist already.

. It was felt that very little documentation exists on non-formal educational processes and learning activities of workers outside the context of residential courses and programmes. A lot of learning and education takes place in daily living, working and struggling. But very little, in terms of analytical, reflective documentation, exists on this. Therefore, it was felt that special efforts are needed to create such documentation which highlights the theme, Struggle as Education, in workers education. This will also take away the focus of workers education from structured courses and programmes to more efforts in informal organising, struggling, learning processes.

7. It was felt that some thrust of sustaining worker education efforts with hitherto deprived sections of the working class needs to be made. For example, workers education efforts in unorganised rural sectors, with fisherfolk, with landless labourers, with construction workers and other workers in the informal sectors of the economy need to be strengthened supported and encouraged

8. And finally it was felt that efforts should be made to link up with a variety of existing workers education institutions, trade unions, associations, organisations and workers education associations in different parts of the world and seek their support to grass-roots workers education initiatives that the seminar represented.

"There is nothing very radical about individuals seeking privilege; but when workers demand equality, that is revolutionary."

Paul Wangoola

P R O G R A M M E

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON WORKERS EDUCATION IN ASIA

OCTOBER 23 - 27, 1986

October 23

Arrivals, Field visits to Worker Education Programme in Sri Lanka

October 24

Inauguration

Introduction of Seminar, its objectives and design

Introduction of Participants

The context and issues of Worker Education in Asia by Mr. Ganesh Pandey, India

Worker Education in Sri Lanka by Dr.D. Wesumperuma, Director, Sri Lanka Foundation Institute

Small Group Discussions on-What is Worker Education

Reportage from small groups to the Plenary

October 25

Presentations of Case Studies

Worker Education among Plantation Workers, Women Workers and Free Trade Zone Workers

Group Discussions on Obstacles and Opportunities in Workers Education with Plantation/agricultural workers, free trade zone workers and women workers

Plenary presentation of small group reports, general discussion

October 26

The ILO Worker Education Programme in Asia by Mr.Stanley Taylor, Director, ILO, Sri Lanka.

Introduction to ICAE Worker Education Programme

Small Group Discussion on future directions of ICAE Programme on Worker Education

Small Group reporting, general discussions on future directions

Review of the Seminar

Acknowledgements/Thanks

October 27

Dialogue with Dr. A.T. Ariaratne, Sarvodaya Shramadana Headquarters

Sharing of personal experiences by Women Workers of Sri Lanka from Plantation and Free Trade Zones

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HELP ME MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT
(RECESSION VERSION)

Send the workers from the factory, shake them loose, and let them fall,

Say your profits arn't enough, send the workers to the wall,

Cos the world is in recession, there's no money, so you say

So us workers have to go, thousands of us from today

Do I care who's right or wrong? Do I try to understand?

All I know is I've been sacked, babe, All I know I need a job

Yesterday is dead and gone, and tomorrow's out of sight

And it's sad to be alone, so come on workers let's unite

Yes I care who's right or wrong, yes we try to understand (all sing)

We will fight for all our rights and we'll go forward hand in hand

So come on brothers, what d'you say? Come on sisters, by our side;

It's no time to be alone, help us make it through this night

Workers Education Centre, Penang